Unique Fandom of MGR

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Tribute

Tribute to
Ms.Marcie Bower, Boston, USA.

About the Author

Dr C Rajeswari is a professional translator linguist writer and editor for three decades. She did her PhD in Translation studies at Madurai Kamaraj University. She has published many articles on Translation Studies in Tamil literary journals *(புலமை, செந்தமிழ், வளர் தமிழ், ஓங்கு தமிழ் நா.வா.வின் ஆராய்ச்சி)* and also a book *மொழிபெயர்ப்பியல் ஆய்வு* a collection of articles which is available in the digital library of Tamilnadu Virtual University. She has rich experience in translating texts from different fields such as Theology, Literature, Ecology, sociology, law and *(Indian Women–Changes and Challenges, Urban Theology, Vaigai Paripatal, Assisted reproductive technologies and its Impact on Women, Eco Vision and Mission, Bachelor's Study Materials for Social Science [IGNOU], Neuro Ophthalmology Articles)* medicine.

She was an associate editor in the Institute of Asian Studies at Chennai in the encyclopedia if Tamil literature and contributed many posts for it. There she learnt Japanese from Yuko san and with her she brought a text book named *Learn Japanese through Tamil*.

She is teaching Tamil language and literature for non - Tamils who are from USA, Europe and Australia. She worked in different translation and religious dictionary projects in the People Education Trust at Madurai. There she learnt biblical Hebrew and Greek.

She has served as a Tamil lecturer for few years in the colleges including The American College in Madurai.

She has been a copy editor and translator in places like Aravind Eye Hospital and taught Tamil to doctors from other states and countries. She has been a Tamil teacher for students from Madison in Wisconsin Madurai program at Madurai. She also helped students in their projects and taught Tamil for the coordinators in South India Term Abroad at Madurai. She prepared text books titled as **Easy English and Tamil for non Tamils** which are yet to be published soon.

She is a researcher of MGR films and politics for more than three decades. She has released 16 books in Tamil about MGR so far and her aim is to publish 100 books.

1. ***வெற்றித் திருமகன் என்ற பெயரில் தொடங்கும் வரிசை நூல்கள் ஆகும்***

2. ***எம்.ஜி.ஆர். நிழல் நிஜம் நிரந்தரம்***

3. ***சிக்கு மங்கு சிக்கு மங்கு சச்ச பப்பா (எம்.ஜி.ஆர். கற்பிக்கும் குழந்தை வளர்ப்பு முறைகள்)***

4. ***வீரமகன் போராட வெற்றி மகள் பூச்சூட***

5. ***மகளிர் போற்றும் மக்கள் தலைவர் எம்.ஜி.ஆர்.,***

6. ***எம்.ஜி.ஆர். ஒரு ஜீவ நதி***

7. ***எம்.ஜி.ஆர். ஒரு கலியுகப்போராளி***

8. *ஒளி விளக்கு எம்.ஜி.ஆர்.*

9. *வெற்றிப் படிக்கட்டில் நாடோடி மன்னன் – I*

10. *நீங்க நல்லா இருக்கணும்*
[எம்.ஜி.ஆரின் திரைப்படப் பாடல்கள் -I]

11. *பாட்டுடைத் தலைவன் எம்.ஜி.ஆர். [எம்.ஜி.ஆரின் திரைப்படப் பாடல்கள் - II]*

12. *இரசிகர்களின் இதய தெய்வம் எம்.ஜி.ஆர்.*

13. *முத்தமிழ்க் காவியம் மதுரை வீரன்*

14. *இரட்டை வேடத்தில் ஜொலிக்கும் எம்.ஜி.ஆர்.*

15. *எம்.ஜி.ஆர். படங்களில் அறிவியல் புனைவு [MGR Science Fiction Films]*

16. *படகோட்டி, மீனவ நண்பன் ஓர் ஒப்பீடு ஆகியவை வெளிவந்துள்ளன.*

This is her first book in English. It has many facts and fantasies about MGR a flow of ideas, perhaps not professionally presented. Her articles about MGR are published in www.tamilauthors.com and vikatan.com

She has translated six books (**Shade of the Flowering Tree, Songs of Dryness, Speaking with You, Language of Love, and A Lady at the little gate**) of Tamil poet Muththamil Virumbi and they are published by Emerald publications in Chennai.

Her short story collection titled as Amaravatiyin Kaadhal is available in amazon.com and pothi.com.and in print.

She has published books on poetry criticism *(பூ மர நிழலில் களமும் காலமும்* and *முத்தமிழ் விரும்பியின் பாடுபொருளும் பாசப்பொருளும்),* religion and culture *(தமிழ்நாடு to ஜப்பான் - சமயமும் பண்பாடும்)* from her Chandrodayam Publications. She has authored and published a book on The Special Schemes and Implementation of Ex-Mayor S. Saithai Duraisamy the Founder of Manitha Neya Arakkattalai, Chennai. She has been working on religion, rituals, astrology, languages and culture for many decades. A series of articles on the sun signs *(என்னோட ராசி நல்ல ராசி)* is being published in Jothidam Malar and articles on religion and rituals are published in Aanmikam a bi-monthly *('மர வழிபாட்டின் வேர்களைத் தேடி (Deep into the roots of Tree worship), காளியும் தேவியும், உலகளாவிய காளி கோட்பாடு (Global concept of Kali))*.

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1. The Unique Nature of MGR Fans

MGR (Maruthu Gopala Menon Ramachandran) was a great philanthropist, a legend and a leader of Tamils living across the seas. He started his life as a stage artist at the age of seven and reached the status of a highly paid top star in Tamil Cinema in South India and his films were box office hits which usually breaks its own records, finally he became a leader of a political party ADMK, named after his

Chief Minister M.G.Ramachandran

political mentor Anna (which also means the elder brother) and held the post of Chief Ministership for more than ten years (again a record break). He won the state assembly elections consecutively for three times. He took sincere efforts to bring peace and harmony among the Tamils and Singalese in Srilanka so he was awarded, the topmost award of the nation 'BharathRatna' posthumously.

MGR entered Tamil film industry in 1934 in a supporting role and sustained in the field doing some important roles to become a hero in 1947. 'Rajakumari was his first film as a hero. This was followed by Mohini and Marutha Naattu Ilavarasi in both V.N. Janaki acted as the heroine and he later married her. After his demise she was elected as the first woman Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. In 1951 he acted in Marmayogi, a thriller movie that secured an 'A' certificate. His punch dialogue attracted in this film attracted the viewers and fans club was started.

Later the club grew in myriads and the members turned to be party cadres in his political party. Till date the fans CLUBS ARE FUNCTIONING in India and other countries. They involve in social welfare activities apart from watching his movies.

In 1954, MGR acted in Malaikkallan a movie resembling the story of Robin hood. This film increased his viewers and fans clubs. The poor and needy believed him as a savior and messenger. In the beginning of 1950s he had enrolled himself as a member of DMK a up growing party against superstitious belief of religions, particularly Hinduism and propagated 'Rationalism' to the youth Energetic MGR propagated his political views in his films through dialogues and songs. So he was believed to be a messenger of DMK prophesied if DMK comes to power, all the sufferings of poor will be eradicated.

Malaikkallan (Tamil) bagged the silver Lotus, a national award for the best film, in spite of this film was taken in six languages including Singhalese. This film had a song which proved to be the successful beginner for political propaganda in MGR films. The chorus was

How long will they cheat us in this nation?

In own nation.

In our nation

The viewers of the film took this song as a voice against the ruling Congress party. The people believed,

Congress party dumped with rich and high caste Hindus were exploiting the poor folk of Tamil Nadu.

MGR appeared in three different characters in disguise with significant make-up changes and voice modulations. An old man, a north Indian Muslim and the young cheerful man,which proved to be a remarkable victory in winning the hearts of the viewers. Then he became the 'Darling of the Mass'. People loved him and the fans club multiplied. He won the appreciation of womenfolk too.

MGR involved in philanthropic activities and proved, that he did everything he actedin his films. He helped the

poor and needy duringthe floods, fire accidents, earthquakes, wars etc. His helping hand was the first to console the vulnerable group. So naturally people loved him as the ‘Messiah and the Saviour’

MGR was keen in physical fitness and was regular in doing physical exercises. He never smoke or drank. So he was appreciated for his clean habits. If someone was complained for some mischiefs or evil deeds, he strictly

warned him with words and slapped as the case may be. MGR was honored as a 'Godfather in the Tamil film industry'. Heroines in their interviews repeatedly say that MGR protected them form the mob in functions and others in day to day life. He helped the poor, protected the vulnerable, behaved well with women and loved his fans. He aimed at retaining his good name among the mass and not losing it at any cause. He also kept up his first place in cinema and then in politics. These two were the secrets of his success.

MGR's physical fitness helped him to shine in his fight scenes. He had a group of stunt actors to do what he pleased in his films. Although a stunt masters like R.N.Nambiyar or Shyam Sundar was appointed, MGR himself composed and edited his fight scenes. He proved in the sets, that he too can do, the risky shots which were to done by the dupes. So the stunt actors had great regards for him. He also helped them in their personal life to educate their children, buy own houses, get their children married etc.

MGR maintained equality in his sets by providing food for all in the sets. The food items served to MGR is served to everyone. This was followed in his house too. Servants ate all the food items served to MGR. He served food for each and every soul who came to his house and everyday hundreds were having sumptuous meal. He used to meet his visitors after they eat food and feel stomach full. Every visitor was invited to the dining hall and served with vegetarian or non-vegetarian food as they wished. Then they waited to meet MGR. He spent a lot from his pocket to food, to educate, to treat the sick and so on.

In 1958 he acted in Madurai Veeran a film about a folk deity. Veeran, a young man from an oppressed shoe maker community fell in love with the princess and eloped her. They went to a nearby kingdom and he was posted as a commander in chief. So people loved this film as it fulfilled their dreams of marrying a girl from the ruling class and being offered a high post. . This film produced in black and white hit the box office record of collecting one

crore of rupees which is still never a beaten up in the black and white film-history of Tamil industry. It was released in more number of theatres than ever before. Fans clubs grew plenty after the hit of this film.

Fan clubs had a rented office to perform their activities. The office bearers like president, secretary and treasurer played a significant role. The clubs collected a membership fee from each.

This amount was used to install cut-outs during the releases of new films, garlanding the huge cut-outs, distribution of sweets, decorating the theater campus, organizing the viewers especially women to stand in queues and get their tickets. Escorting women after night shows and so on.

Apart from cinema releases MGR fans clubs involved in social welfare activities following the footprints of MGR. The clubs helped the people in crisis like floods, draught,

fire accidents etc. They brought people in dissolving and burning huts during incessant rainfall and fire accidents, to the public buildings and schools and fed them with good nutritious food. They distribute saris, dhotis and blankets to the affected lot. They cooked food in the campus where they were sheltered and distributed them hot and tasty. They distributed blankets and other required materials.

During the beginning of the academic year the fan clubs distributed notebooks to students. They conducted public meetings and propagated the party ideals. They celebrated Pongal festival, birthdays of Anna and Periyar. The fans proved to be exact replicas of MGR. These humanistic activities scored a good name from the public for these MGR fans.

One thing that was odd and peculiar about MGR fans, is till date, when they go to a MGR film or when they come back watching a MGR film they behaved like 'possessed' by MGR.

Each fan will try to imitate MGR, sing his song, dance imitating the body language of the hero, involve in some fights too. This behavior put them away from the learned group. The learned society believed MGR fans are mad after him. It's indeed true. Till date MGR fans worship him as a family deity or a clan deity and their family members also honor him and admire him.

Another unique character of MGR fans are the determinant attitude of women. Women of all ages like MGR. The older women treated MGR as their beloved sons. They tell their own begotten sons to live like MGR and follow his footsteps. The young women like MGR as a brother, as a lover, as a social worker, as a humanist etc. These women also taught their children to live like MGR and MGR became the most beloved person of that family. The children of women fans turned to the MGR fans and generation after generation it continues. An eighty year

old grandma, her sixty year old daughter, a forty year old granddaughter, a 20 year old great granddaughter would be fans of MGR in a family. So MGR fandom is a growing phenomenon.

MGR fans are special in one aspect as they never wanted to enjoy any benefit from MGR. They simply wanted to see him in his films and in their places whenever he visited. They are still going to theatres to see his films for the past seventy years. It is a global record that an actor's film is released, re-released and re-released in the theatres for seventy years and fans are watching them with full spirit and vigor. They raise cheers or MGR as 'Long Live MGR'. 'Long live his fame' etc., during the intervals, and before and after the film is screened. Their interest in watching has films has never diminished.

MGR helped anyone who approached him, even from the opponent group. If he came to know of

someone's poverty and hardship, he never waited for him or her to approach him, instead he sent money or other requirements to the affected person, through his men. This was a **unique character of MGR**. This in born character gave him immense happiness and it also earned him a good name. He spent a large amount of income in this regard. He started schools for the children of supporting actors, hospital for them to get treatment, gave free food, books and education for the next generation of the actors to seek good job opportunities. He did everything to support his fraternity and help the others when he was an actor and when he became the chief minister he extended these social welfare activities to the entire state with the help of his power and position.

In 1958, when Nadodi Mannan his own production was released some MGR fans sold their blood to get money and go to theatres to watch his films. It is a unique feature that MGR fans felt it is a sin or crime if they didn't go to the theatre as many times as they could to watch his

movie. It is a sort of support and encouragement they wished to give him. His films not only entertained them but encouraged them to build hope in their lives. The fans gained confidence when they watched MGR films. It was like going to a temple and listening to a 'Harikatha', offering prayers and coming back to homes with a happy mind. There were real incidents that persons going to commit suicide changed THEIR MIND SET when they happened to listen to MGR fans at that moment. So his songs were pro-active and created a positive energy around. When the fans returned from theatres, their minds were full of joy and ecstasy. This will sustain for a week and during the end of the week they go to watch the same film again.

An old lady selling greens in Coimbatore came to watch the film Maattukkaara Velan [Velan the cowherd] in 1970 every evening for hundred days. MGR was invited for the hundredth day celebration and this lady was introduced to him. He interacted with her. She told she was happy with her earnings of three rupees per day and she is willing to spend one rupee for watching his movie every day. He wished to help her but she politely refused and told she is spending her money to watch her son singing and dancing in the movie. Her kind words of accepting MGR as her own son, brought tears in the eyes of MGR. There were thousands of women belonging to this category.

One old mother came forward to pay the income tax due of MGR and called back her son from Arabia to sign the documents to sell the family property and pay MGR the required amount. MGR politely refused and explained things to her and helped her back instead. All fans, men or women want to identify themselves with MGR as a brother or a son or a lover. This is a unique and special nature of his fans.

When the MGR fans start selling their blood to see his films the doctors of the government hospital informed MGR's personal physician Dr.P.R. Subramaniyan (PRS) and he took this issue to the matinee idol MGR and he got chocked and he spoke to his fans. He told them to write to him and he will send the money to them. He sent ten rupees by postal money order to the fans. But they refused to get money from him as they felt it is a crime or sin because he fills their hearts with happiness and

confidence and if they get it shows they are greedy. MGR fans wanted to do something for MGR and not interested in getting from him. So they come and see his films even today in the theaters to spread his name and fame. They organize special shows for the fans exclusively in Chennai.

MGR fan clubs are in thousands even after forty two years, he stopped acting. MGR fan clubs have took a new nomenclature of MGR Peravai in many countries like England, France, Emirates, Malaysia and Singapore. Every MGR fan club was started with social concern ashe was doing roles with social interests only. One of his fan club named after his film Panathottam [Garden of money] was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of India Shri Lal Bahadur Sastri in the Andaman Islands. MGR Peravai was started on last July (2018) with an aim of functioning as an International Non-Government Organisation. This was funded with Fifty Crores of rupees from the family

property of Mr. Saithai, S. Duraisamy, the former Mayor of Greater Chennai. This organisation was planned to function as an international governmental organisation like a Lions club, Rotary International, YMCA and others. So, following the footsteps of MGR, his fan clubs have now extended its helping hands and social concern in a global arena and planning to help others irrespective of language, nation and religion.

MGR had fans in all religions, castes and languages in South India. He called himself with these three letters in the alphabet to show him that he never belonged to any religion, caste or linguistic community. He helped people suffering in all states when he became aware of it. He also helped people in other nations individually and socially as soon as he knew they were in crisis. Wherever Tamils live there would be a MGR fans club in this earth. Enga Veettu Pillai was released in Vietnam with sub titles in Vietnamese language. His films were dubbed in Hindi, Telugu, and Kannada. This paved a comfortable and smooth path for him when he wanted to sublime his regional party to a national party.

All his fans clubs in various parts of India turned to ADMK party associations and the members in the party multiplied. He started his party in all cosmopolitan cities of India. During the reign of his successor Jeyalalitha, All India Anna DMK gained the status of the third largest party of the nation although she didn't do anything to sustain the status of it as a national party. Her charisma and determination gathered one and half crore membership

and claimed the status of a national party. In spite of her multilingual skills and charisma she could have travelled far and wide in the nation and developed the party to a larger level, but she failed to do it, she was a denizen and never moved out.

MGR fans clubs were so possessive with MGR and they had permanent fight with another leading actor Sivaji Ganesan's clubs. Sivaji Ganesan also had fans clubs but not as active as MGR fan clubs and their social activities were limited. Moreover Sivaji acted as drunkard and womanizer so he was appreciated only for his acting and nothing else. He too started a political party after the death of MGR but it lost its deposit in all places. Till date the quarrel continues between the two fandoms.

Once MGR got irritated with the activities of his fans and asked them to close the clubs. The fans reacted. They said, 'you have no say over that. We started the clubs and we will continue we didn't start the clubs on your request or command'. MGR was shocked. Then he realized the love of his fans was priceless and he must not command them. He felt that he should honor their intense love towards him. Then he conducted state level meetings, regulated their social activities and minimized enmity towards Sivaji Fans clubs. Otherwise both fans clubs used to fight and shed blood. Till date the fight between both persists, but to a limit. Sivaji fans clubs have become almost none and the existing few are also not active. They celebrate his birthday and remember his death anniversary.

MGR fans are unique in following his principles and activities to the possible extent. Most of them expressed their say that “I follow MGR so I respect my mother as my god. I don’t smoke or drink. I help the poor and needy. I raise my kids showing MGR films and they are good. There are some fans who dress like MGR, who follow the hairdo of MGR, moustache (thin) like MGR even in their old age. There are MGR fans who help others in need as MGR did in his films and real life.

Ramesh in Chennai, offer free spectacles to old people and offer free trips to regular Chennai goers for work or study, in his omni van for about five kilometers from a suburban area to the railway station and took them back in the evenings.

MGR fan ‘Iyesu Putran’ in Cape Comorin follows MGR and rescue people who go into the sea to commit suicide. He wanders in the shores and if feels someone is crossing

the limit he'll jump in and bring that person to the shore, alive, by dragging his hair. He calls himself as MGR because he wants to live a life like MGR. After he watched the film Padagotti' in which MGR acted as a fisherman.

Iyesu puththiran [Son of Jesus] wanted to live useful for the society and he started rescuing the people alive and if dead, bring the body, from the sea. In the film Padgotti, MGR was the leader of fishermen and he worked for the betterment of their financial improvement by utilizing the government schemes. So Iyesu puthran also wanted to be like MGR and help his fellowmen. He will bring out the bodies stuck inside the rocks of the sea. This is a risky venture but he wanted to follow MGR in helping human kind and take these rescue efforts as a challenge. He says "It is not enough to be a MGR fan and watch his films five times a week, but to follow his principles and

help people in grief'. Iyesu puththiran is not only a fan but also a follower.

MGR's status among the fans is they honor him as a philosopher and not just an actor or a politician or a leader of Tamils. He has taught people the right path is helping others; the right happiness in wiping the tears of the vulnerable. Some of his fans honor him higher than a philosopher, as a God. There are fans who refer him as Theiyvam and not as MGR or Thalaivar [the leader] which are common nomenclatures found in Tamilnadu.

One fan called Kalaivaanan has built a temple for him and the fans go there to worship him. Fans fast on his anniversary, 24th December to his birthday 17th of January, perform pilgrimages to his temple, conduct special prayers, took the 'Uthsava Murthy' around the streets, utter 108 name (names) as 'Nama Sangeerthana Puja' and so on. This temple is in Thiruverumpur near Chennai.

Women's role in MGR fandom

Women fans of MGR honor him as a godfather and offered due respect for him. These women were considered 'mean' by the male chauvinists. Women enjoying the acting and dancing of a man other than her husband is believed to be infidel in Tamil culture. Still women were very strong in their views and expressed their support for MGR. There were some 'Kangaroo courts' in villages discussing the wife being a fan of MGR and husband, a fan of Sivaji who refused to live together. The

elders in the village advised them to go to cinemas separately, not together and never discuss about MGR and Sivaji at homes. This happened in families irrespective of wealth, caste and religion.

After six months of MGR started Anna DMK 1977, his party contested in the bye election conducted at the constituency of Dindigul. Five parties contested. A newly married bride in one of the candidate's house of a very old political party was wearing a rose with two leaves in her hair do. Two leaves is the symbol of MGR's party. She was a fan of MGR so she wanted to show her favoritism and support to him. She didn't mind her husband's family was supporting another party.

A friend and guest of the family pointed out the two leaves and the daughter in law was advised to follow the political principles of her in-laws. She vehemently refused. Her husband was ashamed and he told if not she had to leave the home as she would be divorced. She boldly replied 'If my fate is like that, no one can help it'. She cannot change her support for MGR's party, instead she could leave her husband and be a deserted woman. Everyone was shocked. This is the magic of MGR.

MGR had, and still has strong and determined women fans, who contributed a major role in the victory of the party. Till then, women had no individual political opinions. They followed their husbands' ideas and voted for the party supported by men. But MGR changed that practice. His women fans had their own ideas in politics

and voted for Anna DMK. This is a real political revolution in Tamil Nadu which the correspondents and journalists didn't expect in the state assembly elections in 1977. They didn't approach women during their opinion polls. Women were ready to leave their husbands but not withdraw the support for MGR, his films and his party. They relied upon MGR as a Savior. Women were fans irrespective of their literacy, wealth, caste, religion and language. They rendered their strongest and fullest support to him throughout his rule and life.

Elite and literate fandom

The fans belonging to learned group demands a special mention. They were inspired by MGR in many ways. They enjoyed music, fight and dialogues of MGR.

These were proactive and brought positive vibrations to them. Orissa Balu a researcher and social scientist of Tamil is an ardent fan of MGR. He found Tamils two thousand years ago, travelled in ships by following the sea route of the turtles. He has traced the settlements of Tamil in 205 countries who had married the natives there and became the citizens of respective places. He told me that he was inspired by three films of MGR to involve in researches. Aayiraththil oruvan encouraged him in marine researches Kalaiyarasi to study about the space and Ulagam Sutrum Vaaliban to visit foreign countries. So MGR has inspired the learned people in a different perspective.

Saptharishi Laa.Saa.Raa the son of a great philosophical fictionist Laa. Saa. Raamamirtham is a great fan of MGR. Rightist and Senior journalist Kolahala Sreenivas is an ardent fan of MGR. There are many learned scholars who approached me and shared their interests in

watching MGR movies and their love and admiration for him. Orissaa Balu and Saptharishi LaSa.Raa told me that they love to speak about MGR, for hours and days.

Main reason for MGR's strong fandom irrespective of gender, caste or religion is he insisted on following good habits, love and respect for woman hood, helping the vulnerable & standing for good values. He lived as he acted or preached in his films. His film characters and his real life seemed to be the same. So people raised their kids to watch, enjoy and follow MGR. So MGR fans were educated by their mothers and fathers and generation after generation it continues.

At present, MGR fandom is carried to countries across the seas by the Tamil speaking people and they organize activities and start MGR Peravai [Forum] wherever they live and flourish. They install statues for him. Next to Thiruvalluvar we see MGR statues installed in other countries. MGR is gradually elevated to be a universal phenomenon and honored as a leader of Tamils internationally. MGR has become a legacy for the generations to come.

2. Efforts of MGR to retain his image as a benevolent youth

MGR entered the field of stage arts at age of 17 due to poverty when he was 30 he became hero and reached his supremacy in the Tamil film industry at the age of 40 then he retained his image as a youth, as a vibrant and cheerful person. He acted for another 20 years from 1947 to 1977. When he was acting with Manjula of 16 in the film rickshakaran an article was published in the then popular English journal. The Illustrated weekly with the title '60 with 16' which referred MGR as 60 and Manjula as 16. Even at the age of 60 he could match with the 16 year old girl with his fair complexion, good, physique and body language revealing his energy and dynamics apart from the story and his social concern.

From his little age, MGR took special efforts to keep his physical fitness by regular exercises, workouts and martial practices. He had all equipment in his house; he used to get up early in the morning and do the exercises to maintain his fitness. He also insisted this for

his family members. In spite, he has no child, he insisted this physical exercise for his brother's children and his brother in law's children. They were raised by him in a principled manner.

MGR was a dream boy for young girls and the 'darling of the masses when he was acting in films but his life was not a bed of roses He travelled through many difficulties and sufferings in his personal and political life. His main challenge was overcoming his aging process and he succeeded in it. In the films released in 1977 he had tight close up shots for his lips and eyes in the love scenes with teenage actresses. The fans enjoyed these scenes as he looked, charming and handsome.

When was he born?

In the official records MGR's date of birth was marked as 17 January 1917. When he was acting in

Marmayogi which was released in 1951 one of his friends told ‘after the age of 40 MGR is gaining fame and name in the cinema industry. MGR immediately interrupted him and told ‘don't disclose the age’ as it may mar his image. He was in the initial stage of his career, seeking attraction and support of the viewers as a hero in the films. This film Marmayogi took him to unimaginable heights in the Tamil cinema. In Tamil cinemas it was the first film for its thrill and horror.

If the above said incident was true MGR must have been born before 1910. It is understood that from that time onwards he was very conscious of maintaining his physique and youth image to suit the concept and content of his ‘DO GOOD’ hero films.

When MGR was acting in the stage dramas he became an ardent fan of the actor P.U. Chinnappa who is good at sword fight, on the stage. He loved martial arts and was good at it. MGR was a regular visitor of Maruti thehappayirchi Salai (Gym) in Coimbatore when he was acting in Jupiter films in 1950s. He and Sando Chinnappa Thevar, the proprietor of this gym became friends. These two along with the Nambiar the later villain actor spent their free time in martial arts and weight lifting in those days. MGR used to lift heavy weights than the other two gentlemen.

MGR was good at boxing and pole fight. Since he could not afford to buy isometric equipment, he chose a tree and stood a feet away from it; rested his palms on

the trunk; and pulled his body closer and away from the trunk. Thus he practiced isometric exercise for his chest.

His weight lifting and wrestling helped him in building up his image as a great Hero when he lifted the villain and threw him down on challenges. He composed boxing and wrestling in his fights in many of his films like Kavalkaran, Kanji Thalaivan Chakravarthi Thirumakal, Anbe Vaa. He effortlessly threw the stuntman on the ground because of his continuous and strenuous practice in martial arts and weight lifting.

MGR bought a site near his studio in Chennai and turned to be a place for the stunt group to come and practice every day. Whenever he got time he used to go there and watch them. His fight scenes made the people believe that he was strong enough to manage any crisis. His fans had a great love for his fight scenes so he composed them with utmost care and attention. None other did like that. The importance he gave to his fight scenes and his physical fitness attracted men and women and made them believe he is bold and courageous to punish the evil souls of the society.

Proved his fitness in the public places

MGR proved his fitness in the public places and made the public believe that he was strong and bold. He run on the stairs when he had to garland a statue; he jumped from the bonnet of his van on to the stage due the pushing crowd around that van. Once he climbed and stood on a

very small cement platform around the Anna's statue in Madurai to garland and honor him. He put his left hand around the statue to hold it tight and garlanded the statue with his right hand. Then he jumped down. People who stood around were astonished.

MGR tried risky shots in the outdoor shoots even when the 'dupe' actor was ready for that scene. He slapped the mischievous men when they misbehaved with the actresses in the outdoor. This had happened in many places in and out India, like

Kashmir and Japan. The actresses had mentioned this in their interviews and grateful to MGR for protecting them in outdoors shooting spots. He signaled his men to

pull away the misbehaving person from the crowd and protected the women who attended his public meetings. His fans had a ‘savior group’ who escorted women when they returned home after watching MGR films in the night shows. These women belonged to the working class and they had time only in the night to watch films.

Gunshot turned to a blessing

MGR was of normal height for an Indian man and he was not so well built in 1967. When he was shot by his fellow artist M R Radha and lost his weight and sound voice during the treatment, his fans and supporters prayed for his recovery and it was a miracle that he was saved in that attempt to murder.

A part of the bullet struck in his throat and didn't pierce through his throat or back side of the neck; it stayed there. After many years it came out when he had a cough. He could not articulate the retroflex sounds after the gunshot but as a blessing he became thin and handsome. He turned like an young man with high cheeks and slender

body. His chubby cheeks disappeared. Even accidents help MGR and turned him to be a blessing in disguise.

After this gunshot MGR acted in many super-duper hits like Kavalkaran, Kudiyiruntha Kovil, Nam Naadu, Adimai Penn, Ulagam sutrum Valiban, Idhayakani and so on.

Unique love of MGR fans

After the gun shot MGR could not speak words with r, l t sounds audibly. If he say 'Murugan' it was like 'Mogan' but the fans didn't hesitate. They loved him and supported him. MGR's friends suggested for a dubbing artist to deliver his dialogues but MGR was stern in his decision, he told, 'Let me speak as I could and if my fans accept it I will continue to act and if they rejected me I will retire from this field'. To the surprise of his friends, his fans accepted his dialogues and they didn't feel any dissatisfaction towards it. They were happy and looked upon it as a miracle that he survived from the gun shot. His fans prayed for him and believed that he had taken a new birth and it was the answer and blessing of the Lord Almighty for their prayers.

It is a unique character of the fans that they took everything in the positive way with MGR. whatever he did in his reign as a chief minister was understood as the right action and reaction. His fans didn't have any grumbling over his activities or decisions. They believed everything he did was right and fine. They relied upon him and trusted him.

Curling the hair in 1940s

There was a craze for curling hair among the actors and rich men in 1940s and fifties. They used hair creams to keep their hair curl and shiny. MGR could not afford to buy such creams. He had a straight long black hair. Since he acted in female roles in those days in stage plays he had to grow long hair.

To make his hair curly MGR used the firing technique which is now common in salons. He put a long iron rod in the burning stove and kept it on the hair then the hair get burnt and it is left called curled. His hair lost its density so he had to wear a wig at the early stage of his career in 1960 itself.

MGR used different type of wigs in each of his film. In these days too his fans identify his hair style and tell the name of that particular film. This created a criticism among the opponent groups and his competitors. They criticized him as an old man with a bald head and he replied it is the decision of the film viewers to support him or ignore him from the industry. The viewers and fans didn't groan for it.

Viewers of MGR films were happy in admiring him in different wigs and they loved the hair styles of him. His fans supported everything he did; he followed; he practiced. They enjoyed his different hairstyles and felt encouraging to do more number of films.

When he went to shoot 'Adimai pen' his own production in Rajasthan he was gifted with a fur cap and he wore that throughout his life. His corpse was having that cap and black glasses when kept for the funeral rites. After starting to wear this cap only once in his life at Madurai during a press meet he removed his cap and the photographers captured him in their camera. Charuhasan the elder brother of Kamal hasan told when he went to greet MGR in 1977 when he became the chief minister he saw MGR with a black dense hair and he was not bald. Still MGR was fighting with his natural aging process and retained his image.

Selection of heroines and other artists

MGR was very keen in casting artists for his films. He had a set of people who often get repeated in his films.

Sometimes he changed one or two of them. Especially with the heroine he followed certain principles. He always preferred unmarried and young slim girls to be his heroines. This would be a supporting factor for his youth image. If the heroine became fat and stout he never hesitated to find an alternative.

There are few exceptions for specific reasons. He acted with young heroines like Saroja Devi in 16 films, Jayalalitha in 18 films and Lata 12 films. He acted with Savitri and K.R. Vijaya in few films as the role demanded young mother.

MGR never acted with the same actress as a sister, lover and husband continuously one after other or in a contemporary period. He believed this will damage his image and was keen in avoiding it. He had never acted with his long term heroines Jeyalalitha, Saroja devi and Latha as a brother or brother in law or father. One exception is Lakshmi. She acted in his films as a sister in

Ithaya veenai and lover in Sangae mulanku and Maattukkaara Velan.

Main role for the villains

Nambiyar was believed to be a tough villain for MGR in his films. MGR acted in large number of films in dual roles and in half of these films [7] Nambiyar was the villain. In general it was Asokan who had acted as a villain in most [88] of his films. The villains were expected to be well built and good at martial arts and fights to give a real tough for MGR in fight scenes. They were not encouraged to act as a hero in any film because the viewers have developed a hatredness and aversion towards the villains and enjoyed the heroism of MGR. R.S.Manohar, O.A.K. Thevar, Ramadhas also contributed their best in the additional - villain roles in MGR films. Main villain role was usually given to P.S.Veerappa, Nambiyaror and Asokan.

MGR had a group of stunt actors like Shankar, Justin, Puththur Natarajan, Mahalingam, Shakul to support the

villains in their vicious activities. They took part in the fights and made it a gala victory. They have written books on him.

MGR fighting and defeating many men at a time was admired and applauded in the theatres. This was too big to be accepted by the 'so called' intellectual viewers. So a question was raised and MGR answered it in an intelligent way. He said 'If Abimanyu can fight against many able and efficient warriors in the battle field, why can't I? Moreover he planned every fight in a novel manner with innovative and creative ways.

The significant role played by the villains and stunt men had a remarkable place in maintaining the image of MGR as a youth. They looked gigantic and also felt happy to fight with MGR. Stunt actor Shakul explained me how the the fight scenes were planned in MGR films. This meticulous planning was an outcome of his efficiency and effectiveness in planning the shots. Since he was well versed in editing he sat in front of the editing table and edited the stunt scene.

Planning a flight scene

There were three steps in preparing for the fight scenes. First the stuntmen practice all the movements of the particular fight planned for that scene. For example if it is a pole fight they practice all movements of that. Secondly the stunt master M.N. Nambiyar or Shyam Sundar or any other trained them according to his composition without the set or away from the shooting

spot. One of the stunt man did the role of MGR. At the final stage MGR

was called to see the fight. Then he would do the necessary changes and the stuntmen were always happy and satisfied with his promotions. [I could observe this feeling in their interviews. They were so excited in sharing the intelligence of MGR in composing the fight scenes].

Thirdly the scene was rehearsed in the shooting spot and finally MGR would join that. Whoever the director or stunt master maybe it was only MGR who decided the camera angle, set decoration, set properties, fight composition etc. As 'All roads go to Rome', in MGR films all techniques were planned towards the image maintenance of MGR.

When MGR became image conscious his films followed a set pattern of a well-defined story with

traditional values and modern principles of equality. The traditional values revealed his love for everyone and his humanitarian activities towards the poor and needy. The modern principles of equality criticized caste and class discrimination.

MGR film stories had a great respect for women so his films had a loving mother. As he was brought up by a single parent, a sacrificing and a strict mother, in most of his films he had a loving mother and only in a few he had fathers. This enabled old women to treat him as their own son and we have many such incidents to quote.

In the real life of MGR he had one elder brother which was copied in his films too. He had no sisters and in films also only in few he had sisters. In his films wherever

he referred his elder brother as Anna it matched with his own brother and his political mentor Arignar Anna who was fondly referred as Bernard Shaw of South.

MGR respected women in his house, in his industry and in his films. So he loved by them irrespective of their age and status. He never used abusive terms against women in his films; he maintained the traditional distance advised by the elders of the society in the films and in the public. He always kissed the little girls on their forehead and not on their cheeks. He bowed and showed his respect to the elder women. His love scenes were appreciated and admired for his gentle approach and being affectionate to the girls who were never lustful or erotic.

MGR's meticulous planning and strenuous efforts in maintaining his image to the core were supportive in getting him votes in the elections and his implementation of social welfare schemes helped him to retain his name and fame as an everlasting glory till date.

3. MGR's Philosophy of Love and Freedom

The secret of MGR's success in the cinema and politics is love your fellow beings and be free from the clutches of religion, caste and class. MGR the three letters magic insisted on his fans the four letters words LOVE and be FREE. He built hope and confidence among the rural folk and his film viewers to love their fellow men and be loved by their fellowmen. When you start to love your fellow men naturally you come out of the chains of religion, caste and class. He practiced this in his cinema and real life. He helped one and all, irrespective of state, language and nation. So 'Love and be loved' is his humanitarian philosophy of success in both large competitive fields.

MGR is a role model for love and affection. He loved all, irrespective of caste, language religion and nation. Wherever he went, he helped the needy. If the beneficiary was his fan or regular film viewer, he felt grateful because he believed his sophisticated life is gifted from the ticket fare of their poor earnings. So he expressed his bountiful gratitude and love for them in all possible ways he could.

When he became the chief minister he implemented welfare schemes to feed the kids from the age of four months to the age of eighteen, and the elders in the Nutritious food centres. He also gave the elders a pension to lead a life of content. He appointed 10, 000 women in the nutritious food centres, the preference was given to the widows and deserted women. This seemed to be the highest volume of government appointment on a single day in the history of India. So his cinema life and political life resembled each other in social activities.

How was he different from DMK?

DMK and DK, both Dravidian parties propagated their hatredness towards Hinduism and Brahmanism which could not be done away with at that time. The poor people were helpless and hopeless. MGR did a magic in his films by acting as a 'Savior of the miserable' and he sowed the seeds of love in the minds of the viewers. Although his films portrayed him as a 'undefeatable hero', little things like helping the disabled or aged could be followed by

anyone, which will in turn make them happy and bring hope in their lives. He indirectly taught - amidst all sufferings and hardships, there are many good things which people can practice in their lives and be happy and make others happy. Once a person love his family, friends, neighbours, fellow men and the place he lives in naturally he will feel happy and content and never blame or grumble others

MGR's entry scene in his films was well planned to bring an idea as a 'Savior' of helping others. These scenes were like helping a blind to walk safely, guiding an aged lady to come out of her hardship, rescuing a child from a life risk, saving a young girl from cruel men. These scenes introduced him as a man who loved his fellow beings and did the best for them. Offering small helps to the under privileged is a social service, every man can do, all the time, with no effort. His fans clubs followed him and did a

lot of social service then and now. Helping the needy brings happiness to everyone. So MGR taught this type of humanitarian activities and built hope in the minds of the needy that they were not always on the receiving side. They were privileged with giving happiness not by money but by seeking the blessings of the others.

MGR fans, individually and as fan clubs helped the needy in all means and developed as great humanitarians. Till date irrespective of their wealth and status, every MGR fan comes forward to help others and feel happy and proud at it. This is a great philosophy that MGR brought out by his films and his life. Both went hand in hand with each other.

MGR didn't criticize any God or religion or religious rituals as it may offend his fans, belonging to that religion. He had ardent fans from Christianity and Islam also. He was believed to be a secret Christian by Christians watching his films. He had a good number of Muslim fans. After the film shooting of Ulagam Sutrum Vaaliban in

Thailand where Tamil Muslims were the most of the land owners. These people were carried away by the compassion and behavior of MGR his vote bank of Muslims increased. He showed the relative of Buddha, Jesus Christ, Gandhiji in his films when he was in DMK party.

After Anna DMK was started he boldly showed the pictures of Hindu gods in his films like Pallaandu vaazhga. Watching MGR films created positive vibration among the viewers as he showed the best and happy part of the world in large number of scenes. He built hope and confidence in them by involving them in humanitarian activities. Watching his film and following him in their lives kept his fans active and cheerful. His films enabled them to come out of the clutches of caste and religious discriminations.

MGR films broke the same old beliefs customs, rituals and hard mentality of the people that Karma is the reason for their sufferings. The viewers of MGR films released their minds from the 'good old' chains, the set pattern of 'Karma' concept. His films liberated the poor and oppressed from the religious psychological prison and the rich and forward castes from the golden case of seclusions to servitude. It was a brahmin who first started his fan club, says Thomas Hardgreeve in his research report. So he freed both the sectors and classes from their chains and let them free to fly and serve the human kind.

The difference between the rich high castes and poor low castes were widened due to caste and class variations. fixed by birth. Due to industrial revolution salaried people came into existence and urbanization started in a rapid speed. Poor and oppressed, hardworking farmers moved from the villages to work in factories and industries in the

cities. This migration helped them to come out of the oppressive experience from the villages. Now gradually they are freed from the tunnel vision of the caste system. Love is the sweet substance of all religions and MGR loved all and he was loved by all even by his opponent party men and competitors at one stage. He helped one and all. He never pulled back his hand for his opponents or critics. There were few journalists and novelists who criticized very loudly on and off the stage. His concern for his fans and people was so great that he didn't take these critics into account and simply ignored them. The 'so called' intellectuals who wrote and speak against him were ignored by the people or they were impressed by his qualities and became his supporters.

Critics always put two things against MGR, one is he was acting with young girls and he is acting as a youth in his films. MGR answered the fans and viewers had accepted him as an youth acting with 'teen' girls in his

films and the stories demand such acting. He told since he is an actor and acting is his only profession (politics is her service) it is a challenge he had look up, acting away from one's age is a difficult one and he is successful in performing it. He kept his mind happy and young.

Kamalhasan pointed out in one of his interviews, an actor is twenty can act as a man is eighties but an actor in sixty acting as a youth is really difficult and MGR has proved that successfully. So MGR's acting which was criticized in those days was later understood and agreed, when those critics grew older and weaker. When days passed his love for his people was realized by his critics and his films were enjoyed by them. Interviews and writings of Jeyamohan and Dr. Ruthraiya revealed the aforesaid.

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office his studio for the expenses of the Deaf and Dumb Residential School, his house (open space) for the Deaf and Dumb School, another building to run his MGR memorial.

The house he lived in was shared among the girls who was raised there (children of his brother in law) his adopted daughter and son. These two children are also orphans of his wife's family. Their parents were succumbed by an epidemic disease.

MGR realized the truth of life from the poverty he experienced from his childhood. He learnt love alone can wipe away the sorrows of mankind. It is not money or status going to uplift them because love gives content and others cause for pleasures. So MGR propagated love and joy through his films and he practiced in him life. Joy and beatitude beyond description in his films made people free from their shackles of psychological conditioning due to oppression. Poor and women are the more oppressed and they loved MGR films as they enjoyed love and freedom and wished to practice is their lives. When they love others and help them experienced they superiority feeling they are the honors and not receivers.

People of the downtrodden, oppressed and at grass root level enjoyed MGR films as there was a tradition of romance and bravery in the folk tales and in Indian epics. The romance of Arjuna, the bravery of Abimanyu, the ethics of Yuthistra or Dharma, the virtues of Rama and finally the climax fights in both the epics are well known

to the people from their childhood days. Tales of Mathurai Veeran. Desingu Raja were folk lore creations that people enjoyed were found in MGR films and enabled them to look at their folk heroes and epic heroes in the form of MGR on the silver screen.

People of Tamil Nadu had a literary tradition of heroism from the age of Sangam, the period of classical literature. So A. K. Ramamujam the translator of Sangam poems called as the 'heroic poems of love and war'. The same creation with the same theme is found in MGR movies. Heroes freed the oppressed from their chains of slavery, in any form, So MGR's love for the needy and freeing them from their chains was appreciated. The chivalric romance of folk or epic heroes who rescue the dowses in distress were loved by people and it gave them a vicarious feeling to identify themselves with the hero.

They were also in need of a savior and MGR came at the right time.

MGR showed himself as highly idealist protagonist and he lived like that till the end. It was a miracle that he recovered from the gunshot of M.R.Radha in 1977 and treated for a cerebral vascular block and kidney failure, in 1985. His niece donated her kidney and she is healthy with

her single kidney. So the crisis faced in his real life also was successfully manned and he came again as a phoenix bird from the ashes. His heroic image was retained. [The finale was his facial make up done for his corpse]. His love for his people was reciprocated and a real spiritual revolution rose up by praying for him and offering and organizing special worship in all religions 'Love and be loved' was is philosophy he propagated through his films and practiced in his life.

MGR created positive thoughts in the minds of his film viewers and public (when he became the chief minister). People believed that he is a man of clean hands and helping nature so his rule is pure and clean. Those who involve in corruption hide that from MGR and if it comes to his notice he would fire them away from the party and government. He is deadly against evil forces. He would never allow them corrupts to dominate and dictate poor folk. So the shared experience with MGR in his films

and life created a make believe world of love and freedom of universal relevance.

A theme song in Hollywood film based on the novel 'Man of La Mancha' goes like this

'To dream the impossible dream

To fight the unbeatable foe

To bear with unbeatable sorrow

To reach the unreachable star'

MGR's theme in his films is more or less nearer to this Hollywood theme song. He helped his viewers to dream the impossible of a poor marrying a rich girl and fighting against her rich father and reach a high place as loved and respected by all.

To bear with unbeatable sorrow is not found in MGR films. He would manage all sorrow and be back as a cheerful person again. MGR didn't speak about 'Moksha' or heaven after death. A person should bear all his sorrows in this birth and attain Moksha is traditional.. But MGR brought heaven, here and made them enjoy singing and dancing and freed them from all bondages. The love for his people was great that he made them experience. 'Sorga' or Paradise in Earth. He didn't speak about'hell' a place of punishment for the villains. He showed all men with vicious mindset, the corrupt and the evil doers. He showed the villain repenting for his sins and praising MGR for his good natured, kind heart. So the villains no more

were villains in his stories. They finally resent and change their path from evil to good. So no hell is needed. Only heaven, paradise, moksha or sorgam is experienced in the experience of viewing MGR films. Hence ‘no unbeatable sorrow is experienced by the viewers in his films.

In MGR’s personal life, when he experienced a gunshot, his voice blurred and people were ready to accept that in his films as they loved him so much. The same thing worsened when he returned from Brooklyn State Hospital. Again people accepted his disability in speech. It was only love that accepted him whole heartedly by this people of Tamil Nadu. So his philosophy of love and freedom helped Tamil viewers to gain confidence and hope in life and he in his ten years period offered food, clothes, education for the students till graduation. He offered food and clothes for the elders. He took care of the vulnerable as he did in his films. When he became the chief minister in 1977, he wanted to start his

service from the kids. Since he was a man, keen in his physical fitness, he gave priority to the health of the younger generation.

In the government schools mid-day meal scheme was functioning with no legumes and vegetables. MGR changed that to a Nutritious meal scheme and extended the scheme to all government aided schools too. The he started a child care centers to take care of the kids from the age of 2 to 5. Nutritious edible balls were distributed to the children less than two. Aged people were offered free nutritious lunch and a nominal amount was as an old-age pension. So MGR loved his people from kids to old ones and took care of them. These schemes enabled women to go to work and earn. They became economically independent. The old ones were free from grief. Uniforms & books were freely distributed to the school students and lessoned the burden of the parents. All these students then got into job oriented courses and

employed in various industries. This raised the life status and style of Tamil Nadu. MGR's love for his people uplifted the status of Tamil Nadu to hold first place in Mother-child Health and in (College Graduation) Higher studies, till date.

MGR felt grateful to his film viewers and never allow them to get offended by police or theatre owners even when they pushed into the crowed to touch him, hug him or kiss him. His sense of humanity and gratitude was immense and he owe to his film viewers. He had to act only in hero-oriented movies to fulfill the appetite of their heroic hunger. That was the need of the people and they

could not accept his death even in his films. He couldn't act in acting oriented movies like Nadaodi and Petraal than pillaiya? These films didn't prove to be a box office hits. Fans didn't want their 'Saviour' to cry as it shows his inability to respond to the situation.

During every film release MGR painted colorful imaginations and a hopeful future in the canvas of the vulnerable. This gradually turned to be a two way responsibility and MGR was locked in it. He had to act in films to quench their thirst. Watching MGR movies brought beautiful and hopeful moments in their life and watching his movie left the fragrance linger behind. This happiness made them feel that they owe to MGR and cast their votes for him when he started a new party and contested in elections. He was the one to enjoy

consecutive success for three times in Tamil Nadu where there is a strong regional party and also a national party in opposition.

முதல்வராக பதவியேற்ற எம்.ஜி.ஆர். நாள்: 30-6-1977

4. Who is MGR to his fans?

A Hero? A Saviour ? A Messiah?

MGR is a real protagonist and not a swashbuckler. He is not only an actor. He is a friend of the fans of all religions all castes and all languages.

He is not only an entertainer; but a friend guide and philosopher to all his fans and cadres. Is that all? No; more to be listed along.

He is a phenomenon. The history of Tamil culture and traditions travel with his films.

He is a hero, a savior, a messiah to his people.

MGR is a legend. A legendary leader of all the Tamils in India and diaspora. He is honored and recognized as the embodiment of Tamil values and culture.

At Thiruninravur near Chennai there is a temple built for him and his fans have turned to be his devotees

and observe fasting for forty days and go as a pilgrimage from his tomb or to his temple or vice versa. So now he has been elevated as a GOD. This is called as Divinisation.

Now let us travel in a time machine to know the route he travelled and his fans appreciation, admiration and adoration for him.

MGR in his films was a protagonist and not a swashbuckler like Robin Hood or William Tell who were admired by the foreign folks. He is similar to an epic hero for his continuous fight against evil and success by following virtues and good values. His physical fitness, outstanding courage, martial skill and strong belief in the

values of life and justice made him the real hero of the Tamils. By name he is a Rama and it is a coincidence his wife was Janaki. He never loved two girls or married two in his cinemas unless the story is a popular folk tale. In cinema he is admired for his smartness and bravery like Arjuna.

'The folk culture of cinema mirrors not only the glamour and sensation of the movies but provides a view of society's values and aspirations. The cinema becomes a projective stimulus to which the audience responds' was the observation of Thomas Hardgrave in his article 'the folk culture of cinemas in Tamilnadu. When he wrote his 'When stars displaced Gods' MGR was only an actor but then he became a chief minister of a state and a national leader by trying to bring peace between the Srilankan Tamils and Singhalese to build a cordial relationship between India and SriLanka, awarded Baharat Ratna and now known as a legend by the Tamils.

In the English movies we see swashbucklers who were adventurous and also a kind of womanizers. In Europe from the late Renaissance through age of reason; from the Napoleon wars extending to the colonial era with pirate Tales in the Caribbean Sea, we come across a number of swashbuckler tales. They were the dreams of the grass root people. The poor and the needy wanted to marry a beautiful princess by rescuing from distress and being adored and admired for the man's valor and courage.

Anthony Hope's 'The Prisoner of Zenda written in 1894, is a type of swashbuckling novel representing a Rutanian romance.

We have read some of the swashbuckler novels of Robin Hood and William Tell in our childhood days. The Prisoner of Zenda acted by Rudolf Rassendyle is well

known for its heroic portrayal and largely viewed; so he became a star from the place of an actor. Similarly the Tamil film Nadodi Mannan elevated MGR as the most powerful star from the place of an actor.

When Tamil film producer AVM Saravanan speaks about MGR he says MGR reflects Hollywood actor Errol Flyne in the sword fights but for his fans MGR is not swashbuckler like a Errol Flyne, but a 'Saviour' or 'Messiah'. Errol Flyne's films Captain Blood, The adventures of Robin Hood, The Sea Hawk were admired for his characterization. MGR is a fan of Errol Flyne but he didn't follow him blindly, he modified to suit the culture of Tamils. Douglas Fairbanks a silent film actor who is the predecessor of Errol Flyne is also noted for his fights and romance.

War and sex are the universal themes which are largely appreciated by the world audience and naturally among the Tamils too from the age of Tamil Sangam.

MGR's unique feature of success in his films are these both. They are intertwined with culture and tradition and well defined. For example we can quote the significant presence of fights and romance in his own production the super duper hit Ulagam Sutrum Vaaliban released in 1973.

MGR's romance scenes are blended with good music and dance with grand sets of grandeur or outdoor scenes to enrich the sense of love and fun. His music sense and knowledge could be understood from his days of boyhood when he was in the stage dramas. At that time every actor must learn Carnatic music and sing on the stage and MGR was not an exception. He learnt from the applause of the audience the taste and admiration of them and used that knowledge and experience in fixing the tune for his films.

When MGR was treated for a brain tumor in Brooklyn State Hospital, Dr. Kanu told ‘the musical part of MGR brain was super’. He had mentioned this in his medical report so it was crystal clear that MGR’s musical part of the brain was good enough to judge the success rate of the tunes. He got the lyrics written according to his views from the writer and if he was not satisfied he turned them back irrespective of counts. He wanted the best from them to satisfy his wants and the success of the films. He

never compromised with anyone or anything in retaining his success and supremacy.

When a question was put to the fan “How does he enjoy a Tamil film? He answered, the first time I go for the star, the second time for the songs and the third time for the acting and then again and again for the fights’. So a MGR fan enjoys the film for the first time as it was acted by MGR and nothing else so however a MGR movie is, the fans would definitely go. Here one can infer the fact why MGR is called as the Minimum Guarantee Ramachandran [MGR]. No film of his, had ever brought loss to the producer. It is always mentioned as moderate profit or abundant profit.

Second time a fan goes to the theatre to enjoy the songs so MGR concentrated more on his songs. He used to tell the lyric writer you can show your talent and skill in writing duets but not in the solo songs. It is my voice and my views. Language is a crucial part of a person's identity and plays a fundamental role in the transmission of culture and traditions. MGR admired and respected Tamil as the best language so he asked the lyric writers to use simple language for a two year old child could sing his chorus with no effort. The chorus should be simple and meaningful was his aim. He succeeded in his goal and till date his songs are enjoyed by his fans and the present generation.

Last week in Malaysia at Soma auditorium they had a music night in which the actors dressed up like MGR, sang and danced for MGR

songs and the fans too joined them. This music night is loved by the MGR fans of Malaysia. There are many orchestra in Tamil Nadu regularly been invited by MGR fans living in other countries for singing MGR songs on the celebrations of his birth anniversary and death anniversary. MGR is still a hero and his songs portrayed his heroism and loved by the men of his time and present.

MGR fans are repeaters of his films. Till date many of his films are re-released and gives good profit to the theatre owner and distributors. Coimbatore stands first in re-releasing MGR films followed by Madurai, Thirunelveli and Chennai. In Chennai fan clubs organize special shows on Sundays and other holidays and love watching the movie with fun and gala. They install more than fifty feet tall cut outs, decorate them with multicolored dozens of garlands, distribute sweets to the viewers and burn camphor for MGR's every appearance on the screen, clap

aloud, dance together and say 'Long live MGR' cheers before and after the show in the theatre.

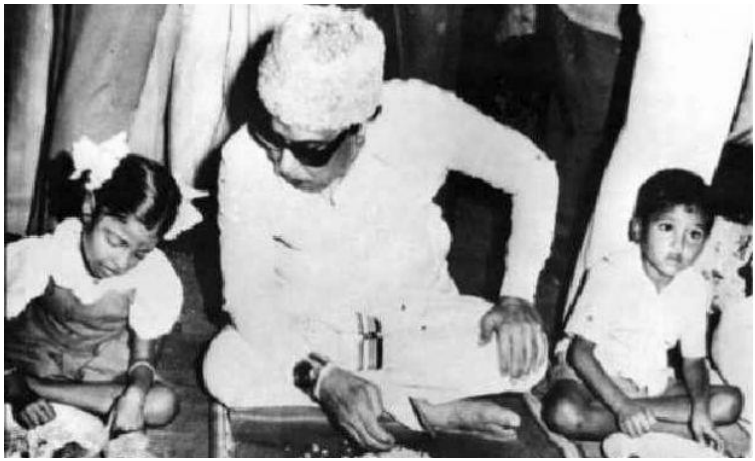
What did MGR do to the fans?

When MGR became the chief minister of Tamilnadu in 1977 he did his best in the fields of agriculture and horticulture, health, industrial development, Tamil, Self-sufficiency scheme for each village, modernization of Police department, Education and employment etc. He organized a World Tamil Conference in Madurai in 1981 and started, World Tamil sangam in Madurai and Tamil University at Thanjavur. He celebrated centenaries for the Tamil poets and nationalized their works. He funded for the translations. He did the most for Tamil language and literature.

MGR's nutritious meals scheme fed the kids from four months to the age of eighteen. This scheme provides food for 62 lakhs and 43,000 of them were school children. 22 lakhs of children were less than 5 had their lunch at the

nutritious food centres. Students from government and government aided schools from the age of 5 to 17 were about 40 lakhs in number; had their noon meals in their schools. They were also given tooth powder and clean drinking water. More than 2,00,000 women were appointed in this scheme and most of them were singles, widows and deserted.

MGR did a lot to the health and education of the children as he was deprived of these both in his childhood days. He gave permission to start 8 medical Colleges and more than 140 engineering colleges. Before his reign there were only seven engineering colleges in Tamilnadu. In the Medical colleges two places were allotted for Jammu Kashmir students 2 places for Nepali students, 8 places for Malaysian Tamil students, 5 places for students from Sri Lanka and Burma and 5 for Tamil students from South Africa and Fuji Islands.



In 1985 MGR started distributing free uniforms for the school students. In1986 his government distributed free notebooks and text books for the school students So MGR took care of the students' health and education.

MGR was the one who cared for the school teachers and he stopped them from going around the village every day in the evenings and picking up people for family planning. MGR included the teachers as the government employees and pulled them out of the control and domination of the presidents of panchayat unions in remote areas and villages. He also gave permission to start Teachers Association for the primary school teachers and the high school teachers. He elevated 400 high schools to Higher Secondary schools. [The other welfare schemes will be discussed later].

MGR fans felt grateful and happy with MGR as he took care of their children. As a token of love and gratitude they cast their votes to his political party generation after generation. So the party is not brought and maintained by the leader but by the cadres. He was a hero, a savior and a messiah who declared he will save his people and he did.

5. MGR is the Head and Fans are his Body

Ayirathil Oruvan (One among the thousand) released on 9-6-1965 was the first film for MGR to pair with Jeyalalitha and it was a super duper hit. This was an adaptation of Captain Blood [1935] based on a novel written by Raphael Sabatini. MGR added few scenes like auctioning Jeyalalithaa from 'Sea Hawk' an another creation of Sabatini. Captain Blood was a film about the sea pirates of West Indies. Peter Blood a physician wrongly

convicted as a traitor, was sent to exile in a British colony where he became a pirate. In reality Sir Henry Morgan a Caribeean sea pirate later became the governor of Jamaica Islands. Errol Flynn was the hero of the film Captain Blood. In this film 'aayiraththil oruvan' MGR has a dialogue to prove his love and affection for his fellowmen. He says, "They (his men) regard me as their head and I respect them as my body". This was not only a cinema dialogue but also a fact in his life.

In another film Padagotti (The boat man) he says 'I am a slave in the name of a leader'. This was also true in his life. Sometimes his fans dominated him. One such incident was, once in a discussion with his fans he got a bit irritated and told, 'No fans clubs are necessary, take them off'. One of the fans shouted 'Who are you to say that? The clubs are started by the fans on their own discretion. Not by your command, request or funds'. MGR was stunned. He then came to know he had no control over the fan clubs. They were based on his heroism, and his

image had deep rooted in their minds. He must try to make the best out of it. They were lovable folks. Then he started to think and act along with the thought process of his fans. He didn't deviate from that path till the last breath of his life.

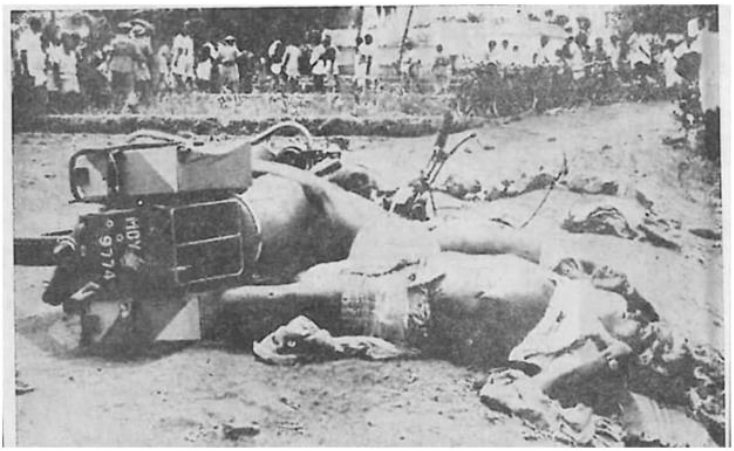
MGR told in his Fans Club Conference in 1984 at Madurai 'It is not very special to have fan clubs in one's life time but after my time also these clubs should function effectively as now and serve the public'. This is strictly followed by his fans till date. MGR fans clubs conduct special shows, install free distribution of water and water melon slices during hot season, help the poor and needy during floods and famine, and distribute books and school bags to the children at the start of academic year and so on.

MGR was gifted to have his fans, his people to pray for his wellbeing and in turn he too planned plenty of welfare schemes for their benefits. Whenever a scheme is planned or an idea was told to him, immediately his

question would he “Is this plan beneficiary for the common people?” if not he would postpone it or deny it.

When MGR was dismissed from his political party DMK, his fans rendered him an overwhelming support. There was a big chaos and calamity in Tamil Nadu against the decision of Karunanithi. It was the first time in the country that a state stood for an individual for sacking him away from a party. Since people believed him as a man of principles and generosity they agitated against the government and the ruling party DMK. Men gathered on streets and conducted demonstrations. They stopped the buses and wrote ‘Long lives MGR’. All the walls were filled with graffiti’s praising MGR and scolding M.Karunanithi.

Many MGR fans like Salem Siththaiyan, Peththaampaalaiyam Palanichaamy, Thuuththukkudi K.V.K.samy, Vaththalakkuntu Arumukam, Puulaavaari Sukumaaran, Chidambaram Balasundaram lost their lives by DMK atrocities. MGR fans were beaten black and blue by the DMK rowdies and also by the police. Many were stabbed or beaten to death. But fans agitated and challenged the atrocities of the government, police and rowdies from DMK party. Women offered their full cooperation for their husbands, brothers and sons to take part in this agitation. It was named as ‘October Revolution of Tamil Nadu’.



Puulaavaari Sukumaaran lost his lives by DMK atrocities

Fans in different cities hoisted MGR party flag according to their own taste and imagination. Everyone wanted to fight against Karunanithi in the political field and dethrone him. The fans urged MGR to announce the name of the party. Fans from other states travelled to Chennai and showed their sincere support to him to wage a political fight against DMK. Fans believed that MGR was the hero and M.Karunanithi was the villain, as if in a film. They firmly decided that M.Karunanithi would be defeated by MGR in the political arena and he will become the ruler of the state. To the surprise of the political spectators it happened.

In the following assembly elections Karunanithi was defeated and MGR ruled Tamil Nadu throughout his life time. His fans proved to be the largest vote bank of the nation for a single regional party. Then MGR elevated its

status to be a national party but his follower Jeyalalitha didn't take any effort to retain it.

In the month of October 1972, after his defenestration from DMK party, MGR was cornered to start his own party and announce the name. He really wanted a breathing time but it was already decided by his fans and he could not reject their will and wish. At that time his fan Anakaputhur Ramalingam had registered a party called Anna DMK and MGR enrolled himself in it and became the general secretary of the party.

After MGR enrolled his name in Anna DMK registered by Anakaputhur Ramalingam the party flag was designed with a line drawing of Arignar Anna, his political mentor. He announced Anna as the leader of his party and later from 1977 to 1987 his government was referred by him as 'Anna's government' and not by his name. To the contrary when Jeyalalitha ruled Tamil Nadu she always referred her government as 'my government' or 'your beloved sister's government' and not by the name of Anna as MGR referred or by the name of MGR following his foot prints.

MGR's fans trusted his good qualities, love and benevolence so they hoisted the flag and made MGR as their leader. MGR ruled the state and retained his place in the good books of his people.

M.Karunanithi poorly estimated the love of MGR fans. When he dismissed MGR from his party he told poet

Kannadhasan that 'ten men may shout and create problems'. He was poor in judging the influence of MGR among the public. MGR fans rose in thousands from each district and hoisted new party flags. They created a 'Suicide Army' to sacrifice their lives for MGR. Few of them self immolated. All of them vehemently stood against DMK and till date this opposition is alive and alert.

Support of Women

The support rendered by women is not less than of men. They encouraged men to involve in agitation. They started discussing about politics with others. Women openly showed their dissatisfaction and hatredness towards Karunanithi as he opened arrack shops and induced men to drink and many men turned to be drunkards. They never spent their income for their families. They ill treated their wives and children by

beating them brutally. So women developed an aversion towards Karunanithi and they wanted MGR a man of clean habits and responsibility to rule Tamil Nadu.

During MGR's travel campaigning or for inauguration of government schemes he used to stop his car and speak to women working in fields. At that time the women, always said, they were happy and MGR need not stand in the hot sun, he could go into his car. These incidents showed the love and care of women for him. They assured him 'If you are happy, we are happy'. Women prayed for the wellbeing of MGR as if he was a member of their own family.

During the floods created by incessant rains in Rameswaram, MGR went to meet his people and he walked through the flowing waters of gutters and rain. Looking at him coming closer to the people near the huts, the women inside the huts rushed to him and stopped him from further walking in that dirty water. They told him, they were all fine and government officials had done everything for them, so MGR need not worry about them. This incident revealed their motherly love and affection for him, and he too performed his duty as their beloved son, forever. MGR introduced a senior citizen pension scheme for the poor and needy. He offered lunch at nutrition meals centre for the uncared and aged. He distributed free clothes to them every year.

The love and respect between MGR and his fans were mutual and reciprocal. The fans wished for the

wellbeing of MGR and in turn MGR helped them in all possible ways to them when he was an actor and Chief Minister. He came to power in 1977 and from that day onwards he implemented several welfare schemes so till date one could never hear a lay man or a politician speak ill against MGR or criticize his love for his people.

6. MGR Turned his Words into Action

MGR is a panglossian. He is super optimistic. He converted his passion to performance. He loved his people and helped them in all possible ways. He reached the zenith by annihilating his enemies. Till his death his political rival Karunanithi didn't return to power. After his death, his successor Jeyalalitha also gave a tough to Karunanithi and pulled him from the post in every other election. Finally she won consecutively in 2016 like her mentor and then passed away.

MGR was noted for his generosity and philanthropism. He never waited for the needy to approach him and plead to him. He went forward to extend his helping hands irrespective of caste, creed, language, state or nation. He had developed an image of a good man of principles through his films. This image was assiduously cultivated over decades through a successful career in the film industry. DMK tried to dent his image but MGR was very cautious in maintaining it and till date it

persists. Even now no individual or any party leader or a cadre can speak ill about MGR.

MGR started his political participation from 1952 after the demise of his mother. His mother was a pious lady that she would have never allowed him to be a part of DMK, a party favoring atheism. His political plunge made a lot of difference in DMK. He tried to make a mark and difference in the party and multiplied the number of laymen to follow it.

Anna, the founder of DMK praised MGR for his service of carrying DMK's ideals to millions of cinema viewers. He explained this to his dissatisfied and murmuring senior party men and office bearers, 'If we speak on stages only thousands of people can get our ideas but MGR is efficient to influence millions by his movies' and convinced them. MGR not only followed the principles of DMK party, he practiced and propagated through his films.

MGR was an epitome of elegance and grace, in Tamilnadu. His fans and supporters bestowed him with new and apt titles. He was called as Vaathiyar (the teacher/mentor). Makkal Thilakam (Darling of the mass), Ponmana chemmal (great man with a golden heart), Puratchi Nadigar and later Puratchi Thalaivar (Revolutionary Actor, Revolutionary Leader), Elai Pangaalan (Partner of the Poor), Engal Thangam (Our Gold) and so on. Elai pankaalan was a title that referred Lord Shiva by his devotee, Saint Manikkavasaka .These titles along with the titles of his films such as Ayirathil Oruvan (one among thousands), Aasai Mugam (lovable face), Ulagam Sutrum Vaaliban (The youth who tours the world), Meenava Nanban (Friend of the Fishermen), are now used in his temple by the devotees as 108

MG Ramachandran (above), A temple dedicated to MGR in Nathamedu, built by Kalaivanan

'naamavali'. Kalaivaanan and his wife, ardent fans of MGR had built this temple for MGR in Thiru Ninravur, 15 km. away from Chennai.

Not only in the films but also in this real life MGR helped the poor and kept them in a happy state of mind. Once when he was travelling in his car, he heard a man crying aloud, so he asked one of his men to go and enquire. The men came with the story that, a horse had died and the horse cart owner was crying aloud. His wife and children were also in tears. MGR called for that horse cart owner. The owner came crying, MGR gave him money to buy a new horse. Till he gets it practiced in his cart, MGR gave some more money for his family maintenance. This was MGR. He never waited for the needy to come and beg him. He went forward to wipe off their. After two weeks that man brought his cart with the new horse to MGR's house and showed him. MGR felt happy.

AVM Saravanan, the proprietor of AVM studios and production house had told in his interview and wrote in his book, that he had seen none other than MGR, who felt happy in giving others. When both were in Simla for the shooting of 'Anbe Vaa', [a super duper hit of 1965, Tamil version of 'Come September'], military men organized a welcome party for MGR. He attended the party with his crew. There he came to know soldiers wounded in the war were admitted in the hospital nearby.

MGR visited that hospital and consoled every ward with his kind words and gave them fruits, biscuits and Horlicks. He borrowed a huge amount and donated to soldiers association. At that occasion AVM Saravanan asked him 'It is for a noble purpose that you donate but why do you donate such a huge amount, why not less?' and MGR answered 'We are happy and safe in Tamilnadu because their soldiers are protecting us in this cold place so we are indebted to them. Saravanan was spell bound. MGR felt it is one's duty to care and support military men. His patriotism could be understood from his film songs and incidents from real life.

When Indo China war started, Jawaharlal Nehru , Prime Minister of India called for donations to make out the war expenditure and MGR was the first to donate 75,000 rupees. Nehruji sent him a letter of acknowledgment and gratitude.

During the Indo China war MGR asked his lyric writer to write a song on patriotism and protecting the nations. The song was written for the film, 'Naadodi'

"Naadu Adhai naadu - Adhai

naadaavittaal Yedhu veedu… Oho ho ho

[Nation - always think of our nation

If not there's no home to live in]

Paadum pozhudhellaam Adhaiyae paadu (2)

Maanam peridhendru Vaazhum panpaadu (2)

[Whenever you sing, sing the praise of our nation

Our culture, is to live for the glory of its self respect.

Naadu adhai naadu Adhai

naadaavittaal Yedhu veedu…

Paalaivanam endra podhum Nam naadu

Paarai malai kooda Nam ellai kodu

Aaru nilam paaindhu Vilaiyaadum thottam (2)

Veerar samudhaayamae Enghal koottam (2)

[Eventhough it is dry, it is our land

The rocks and hills, our territory bound

The rivers flow and the groves are rich

Our people belong to the brave commune.]

Naadu adhai naadu - adhai

naadaavittaal Yedhu veedu…

Vaalum kulamaadhar Mugam paarthadhillai

Vanja ninaivengal Manam paarthadhillai (2)

Veerar vizhi thaazhndhu Nilam paartthadhillai (2)

Vettri thirumaadhu Nadai podum ellai (2)

[Women of good values were not stared at;

Evil thoughts never stay in our minds;

Soldiers never look down to earth on defeat;

Goddess of victory walks around this territory]

Naadu adhai naadu -adhai

naadaavittaal Yedhu veedu…

Pasi endru varuvorkku Virundhaagha maarum

Pagaivar mugam paarthu Puliyaaga seerum

Nilathil uyir vaithu Urimai kondaadum

Edhirthu varuvorai Uramaaga podum”

[Our country turns to be a feast for the hungried;

Stares at the enemies and roars like a tiger;

It has its life on its earth and enjoy its rights;

Those who oppose, are thrown as manure.

So MGR matched his words in his dialogues and songs with his action of patriotism, generosity and humanism. Those who penned his scripts and lyrics transformed his ideas to words. His values and morals evolved applause for him in the theatres and public

meetings finally as a token of gratitude turned to a valiant vote bank.

MGR's personality in the unity of thought, words and action outnumbered DMK in elections and diminished its political influence among the Tamils. His party continued to script success stories from his time till date. In the by elections of 2019 ADMK got 52% of the votes and proved to be the strongest party in spite of the absence of powerful leaders like MGR and Jeyalalitha. After the death of MGR in few elections DMK won due to mistaken policy decisions and behaviours of Jeyalalitha.

In MGR films he fixed a villain who is evil minded, womanizer, merciless, selfish who had a group of minions and stoogs. This reflected the dalliance of DMK in real life. MGR's fans connected Karunanithi with the villain of his films. In his films MGR, usually belonged to a poor family but the villain, a powerful rich man in the society. MGR's film character enabled the fans to praise him as a care taker of the society and not a celebrity. MGR was not a

power monger. In 1967 when M.R. Radha shot him people wanted to show their love and affection to MGR and his posters with a heavy bandage around his neck brought success to DMK. After the death of Anna when the seniors were planning to bring Nedunjeliyan a learned man with a double master's degree, to be the next chief minister, MGR arranged a dinner for all MLAs in his Sathya studio and convinced them to support Karunanithi. This decision brought Karunanithi as the chief minister back to power again in the following assembly election, in 1971. When MGR was dismissed from the party in 1972 vitriolic campaigns of DMK was shattered to pieces by the effective coalition formed by MGR with the communist parties. Victory always shouldered MGR in the cinema field and political arena as well.

MGR, represented the poor and propagated communist policies against the rich in his films. So his alliance with communist parties was regarded as a natural

alliance. His film songs showed his communist ideas and support

‘iruppathai ellaam pothuvil vaiththaale

Eduppavar yaarumillai’

- Nan Aanaiyittaal.

[There is no one to steal

If everything is in common]

‘Kuviya kuviya vilaivathellaam

Kuuru Poodanum – elai

Kudisaikkullee paalum theenum

Aaraa oodanum

- Mugaraasi

[The yield in heaps and heaps

Has to be distributed, evenly

Inside the huts of the poor

River of milk and honey should flow]

They were excited to know the yield would be equally distributed among the needy. This communist philosophy of equality gravitated the poor towards him. Men from congress party and Dalits also supported MGR.

Communist party decided to erect a bust of P Jeevanantham, a senior leader, and started fund raising. Few of the committee members planned to approach MGR while others ridiculed them. T.Pandiyan, and Balathandayutham went to meet him. MGR offered them sweets and snacks, and to their surprise he readily offered the entire amount for the making of the statue and next day another five thousand rupees to build the platform [‘peedam’] and for other related expenses. They were astonished. MGR told them, ‘I speak about communism and propagate communist principles in my films. I knew P.Jeevanantham’s selfless service so I am happy to meet the entire expenses’. So MGR turned his words into action. He matched his cinemas with his life. He had high regards for the men in Communist Party who render selfless service for the society.

Fans of MGR believed him as the 'mightiest of the mightiest'. He was a monarch, a benevolent despot and a savior in the minds of his fans. They waited for hours like eight to ten, to have a glance at his face, when he travelled in his car. They waited for hours to listen to his speech whether it is five minutes or forty minutes. The positive vibration he created among his fans was tremendous.

MGR had the capacity to reflect and absorb changes in the society. Once a widow who got her deceased husband's job on grounds of mercy , married another man. Many male chauvinists stood against her, but MGR was with her. He told, 'the young man would have married this widow for her job and salary so let her earn and live with him happily. Let us not sack her away from her job or position. It may hinder her future'. He supported and took care of women in all possible ways he could. He was empathetic with the oppressed, be a man or a woman.

Until MGR started a new party, women of Tamil Nadu did not possess the confidence to vote for their

desired candidate. MGR films motivated women to speak for their voting right. Especially the heroines [Manjula and Latha] of MGR were characterized as bold and brave to fight against their human rights violators and stood firmly on their own decisions. After 1972 due to real motivation of MGR films, women's own decision on voting resulted in a good move and this proved to be a real Feministic Revolution in TamilNadu.

In 1972 old women explicitly supported him and came to his Ramavaram gardens to reveal their love and support for him to start a new party and defeat Karunanithi.

MGR had mutual respect and trust on women so he brought Jeyalalitha to politics. She came to the forefront in the politics by the support of MGR fans and vote bank. Whenever she committed mistakes and people threw her away from the power she corrected herself and

came back to throne. But MGR was never dethroned because people believed him as flawless. Whatever he did was wholeheartedly accepted by the people. The so called intellectuals in MGR's reign like 'Cho' Ramasamy, (editor of Thuglak) criticized him for free nutritious scheme at the beginning but felt bad about it after few years. Though 'Cho' commented on MGR for his political principles (Annayism), he didn't fail to appreciate him for his generosity and humanitarian concern.

University of Cambridge in U.K. developed an Empathy Quotient (EQ), fifteen years ago. A genetics company '23 and ME' conducted the largest genetic study with 46,000 informants. The findings of this study was published in Translational Psychiatry Journal. The essence of the article is, 'helping others and showing mercy on others is a genetic character'. Empathy is classified into two, namely, Cognitive Empathy and Effective Empathy. Cognitive Empathy is recognizing others feelings and thoughts, but Effective empathy responds with as appropriate to others feelings and thoughts. Here, MGR responded to others feelings and helped them. As Tamil poetess Avvaiyar rightly puts it

'natpum thayaiyum,

Nadaiyum kodaiyum,

Piravi kunam'

Which means 'friendship, compassion, behaviour and generosity are congenital traits'. So helping nature of MGR

was his genetic character. Although many suffered from hunger and poverty in their childhood no one helped the poor and empathized with them as MGR did. MGR was generous in his films and in real life. People who watched his films believed him to be a 'Messiah' first [before 1967] and a 'Savior' later [after 1972], and he proved it.

In cinema, he stood against the evil forces and in reality he challenged Karunanithi for his corruption and nepotism. He was supported by a think-tank of learned men and he shared facts and figures in the public meetings to prove his authenticity.

MGR was simple, humble and glowingly sincere, sharing his ideas with the viewers of his films, strictly following certain principles and clean habits in his life, highly talented and technical in all departments of cinema industry, capable of sensing the likes and dislikes of the public in fine arts and politics and felt happy in the giving others and watching their bloomed faces.

Other books by the Author